

# R1.4bn set aside for qualifying students

PRETORIA: The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has set aside a total of R1.4bn to pay institutions upfront at the beginning of 2016 academic year.



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The NSFAS said the money will ensure that students who qualify for NSFAS funding don't have to pay upfront registration fees, as was recommended by the Presidency.

The Presidential Task Team on short-term funding challenges at universities recommended that all students who qualify for NSFAS should be assisted with upfront payment.

"NSFAS, working with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), has confirmed the financial allocation for 2016/17 financial year to 26 universities. All vice-chancellors have received letters of confirmation outlining amount for each funding category - DHET General Funding; DHET Teacher training; DHET Final Year Funding; and DHET Disability Funding.

"National Skills Fund allocations have also been finalised as sent to universities. Administrative Guidelines on Funding will be communicated to all institution to ensure that rules pertaining to financial eligibility of students for NSFAS are applied consistently," said NSFAS national spokesperson, Kagisho Mamabolo.

Mamabolo said NSFAS technical teams made-up of support staff will be dispatched to all universities to provide support to the financial aid offices to ensure a smooth registration process.

"NSFAS will work closely with all its key stakeholders across the higher education sector to ensure the implementation of all the recommendations made by the task team," said Mamabolo.

NSFAS also thanked President Jacob Zuma, government and the presidential task team for the intervention and continued support.

"These achievements are remarkable and represent a major success in terms of government's redress agenda."

Since its inception in 1999, NSFAS continues to make a positive contribution in the lives of many South Africans in the post-school education and training sector.

To date, the scheme has assisted 1.5-million students over the years and has disbursed over R50bn in bursaries and loans since its inception.

The significant growth of the scheme has been made possible by partnerships with other funders, institutions of higher learning, SETAs and other entities that support equal education opportunities for poor and working class households in South Africa.

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